

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 PA-02 H-02
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DRAFTED BY NEA/P:WBHARRIS:RGH

APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN

PA/PRS - MR. HARRIS

H - MR. FLATEN

SSM - MR. MC ANDREW

NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH

NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER

NEA/EGY - MR. NEWBERRY

NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION SINAI

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION USNATO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

USCINCEUR
DOD
JCS
CIA
USIA
NSC

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD, TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - MARCH 24

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE
EXCERPTS FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR MARCH 24, 1978.
FYI ONLY, SPOKESMAN TODAY WAS JOHN TRATTNER.

Q. WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE EXPECTED AMERICAN STATEMENT
ON THE BEGIN VISIT?

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A. THAT IS A MATTER FOR THE WHITE HOUSE, AND I THINK YOU
OUGHT TO CONTACT THE PRESS OFFICE THERE FOR WHEN AND HOW
THAT IS GOING TO BE DONE.

Q. WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT REVIEW,
OR WHATEVER YOU WANT TO CALL IT, ON THE ISSUE OF WHETHER
U.S. WEAPONS WERE MISUSED BY ISRAEL?

A. IT IS STILL WHERE IT WAS YESTERDAY. I CANT OFFER YOU
ANYTHING NEW ON THAT RIGHT NOW.

Q. WHICH IS WHAT?

A. WHICH IS THAT THE QUESTION IS UNDER REVIEW AND UNDER

STUDY, AND THAT THE REPLY IN RESPONSE TO THE LETTER FROM
THE TWO CONGRESSMEN TO THE SECRETARY WILL BE COMING
SHORTLY.

Q. HAVE THERE BEEN ANY OTHER LETTERS OR INQUIRIES FROM
THE HILL APART FROM THAT ONE LETTER THAT YOU MENTIONED?

A. I AM NOT AWARE THAT THERE HAVE BEEN. THERE MAY
HAVE BEEN, BUT I ONLY KNOW OF THAT ONE.

Q. DO YOU EXPECT A RESPONSE BEFORE THE END OF THE WEEK?

A. IT IS HARD TO SAY. I DONT KNOW WHETHER I CAN ANSWER THE QUESTION INTELLIGENTLY. I DONT KNOW WHETHER I CAN EXPECT ONE BEFORE THE END OF THE WEEK.

Q. DOES IT DEPEND UPON A REPORT FROM THE EMBASSY IN TEL AVIV, OR DEPEND UPON A STUDY GOING ON IN THE BUILDING HERE, OR WHAT?

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A. I THINK IT DEPENDS ON A LOT OF THINGS, INCLUDING THE ONES YOU MENTIONED. BUT THERE IS NO WAY FOR ME TO PREDICT FOR YOU WHEN THEY WILL HAVE THAT.

Q. IT HAS BEEN REPORTED THAT IRAQ IS SENDING IRAQI TROOPS TO SUPPORT THE PALESTINIANS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. DO YOU HAVE ANY CONFIRMATION OF THAT?

A. WE KNOW ABOUT THE REPORTS BUT I DONT HAVE ANY WAY TO CONFIRM THEM. WE HAVE NO RELIABLE INFORMATION, FOR ONE THING, ON THE DETAILS. WE DO APPEAL TO ALL THE PARTIES TO DO EVERYTHING THEY CAN TO ASSIST AND COOPERATE IN THE CARRYING OUT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS 425 AND 426. REINFORCEMENTS OF FORCES IN THE AREA ARE, IN OUR VIEW, OR WOULD BE, IN OUR VIEW, CONTRARY TO THE OBJECTIVES THAT THOSE RESOLUTIONS STATE, AND WE BELIEVE NOTHING SHOULD BE DONE TO COMPLICATE THE TASK AND THE PEACEKEEPING TASK THERE. AND WE HAVE MADE THAT CLEAR TO ALL OF THE AREA GOVERNMENTS IN OUR CONTACTS WITH THEM.

Q. INCLUDING IRAQ?

A. I WILL JUST LEAVE IT AT THAT. WE DO HAVE CONTACT WITH IRAQ, BUT I WILL JUST LEAVE IT WITH WHAT I HAVE SAID, ALL OF THE AREA GOVERNMENTS.

Q. HOW DID YOU MAKE IT CLEAR TO THE PLO?

A. I SAID AREA GOVERNMENTS. I HAVE ALSO SAID THAT WE APPEAL TO ALL OF THE PARTIES IN THE AREA, ALL OF THOSE INVOLVED IN THE AREA, TO DO EVERYTHING THEY CAN TO ASSIST THE CEASE-FIRE IN CARRYING OUT OF THE OBJECTIVES
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OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER NOTION SINCE YESTERDAY OF WHEN UN TROOPS WILL BE IN AND WHEN ISRAELI TROOPS WILL BE OUT?

A. I HAVE GOT A SITUATION REPORT THAT I HAVE BEEN PROVIDED. LET ME REFER TO THAT, IF I MAY.

ACCORDING TO OUR LATEST INFORMATION, THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTHERN LEBANON IS GENERALLY QUIET. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE UNIFIL COMMAND IS MOVING TO IMPLEMENT THE TASK ASSIGNED IT BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL. INITIAL IRANIAN UNITS OF THE FORCE MOVED INTO SOUTHERN LEBANON YESTERDAY, AND SEVERAL HUNDRED TROOPS FROM THE FRENCH CONTINGENT WILL ARRIVE IN BEIRUT SOME TIME LATER TODAY. WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY THIS EXPEDITIOUS UN ACTION, AND WE HOPE, AS I HAVE ALREADY SAID, THAT THE UNIFIL FORCES WILL RECEIVE FULL COOPERATION FROM ALL SIDES IN CARRYING OUT THEIR MANDATE. THERE IS ONE OTHER DETAIL. THE INITIAL SWEDISH PARTY, I AM TOLD, IS IN THE TOWN OF NAGURA.

Q. DO YOU HAVE A COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF ALL THE COUNTRIES THAT ARE TAKING PART IN THIS FORCE YET?

A. NO. I THINK THE COMPREHENSIVE LIST IS SOMETHING THE UN OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO PROVIDE YOU. I DONT KNOW THAT IT HAS ALL BEEN SET AND IT IS IN PLACE, BUT I DONT HAVE IT HERE.

Q. IS IT YOUR UNDERSTANDING THAT 4,000 TROOPS ARE COMMITTED FROM WHEREVER THEY ARE COMMITTED FROM?

A. NO, IT IS NOT MY UNDERSTANDING THAT THEY ARE YET COMMITTED. THEY MAY VERY WELL BE AND I AM JUST IGNORANT UNCLASSIFIED

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OF THAT FACT, BUT 4,000, OF COURSE, IS THE SIZE THAT IS BEING AIMED AT.

Q. WHO IS SCHEDULED TO PAY FOR THIS? I UNDERSTAND THAT THERE ARE REPORTS THAT THE UN IS CAUGHT UP IN A FINANCIAL BIND, AND THIS IS GOING TO COST A LOT OF MONEY. IS THE UNITED STATES PLEDGING TO PAY FOR IT IF OTHER COUNTRIES REFUSE, AND I UNDERSTAND SOME HAVE.

A. FIRST OF ALL, I DONT KNOW THAT ANY HAVE REFUSED TO PAY. THEREFORE IF YOU ARE ASKING ME IF OTHERS REFUSE WHAT WILL WE DO, AND OF COURSE I AM IN THE USUAL POSITION OF NOT BEING ABLE TO ANSWER AN "IF" QUESTION. I THINK THAT THE COST OF THE PEACEKEEPING FORCE WILL BE BORN IN THE NORMAL WAY BY ASSESSING THE MEMBER STATES OF THE UNITED NATIONS.

Q. HAS IT BEEN MADE KNOWN TO YOU HOW MANY FROM THE LEBANESE UNITS ARE REQUIRED IN THAT AREA TO JOIN THE UN

TROOPS?

A. I DON'T KNOW THAT ANY ARE GOING TO BE REQUESTED TO JOIN. I AM NOT AWARE THAT LEBANESE ARE BEING ENVISIONED FOR THIS FORCE, BUT YOU OUGHT TO CLARIFY THAT BY TALKING TO THE UNITED NATIONS.

Q. HAS THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT INFORMED OFFICIALLY THE U.S. OR THE UN, ON THE STATEMENT YESTERDAY BY GENERAL GUR THAT AS SOON AS UNIFIL IS IN, THEY WILL MOVE OUT OF SOUTHERN LEBANON?

A. I DON'T KNOW THAT THEY HAVE OFFICIALLY INFORMED US OS THAT, NO. THEY HAVE ACCEPTED THE SECURITY COUNCIL UNCLASSIFIED

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RESOLUTION, AS YOU KNOW, AND ARE PREPARED TO COOPERATE IN IMPLEMENTING IT. BUT, AGAIN, THE TIMETABLE OF THEIR WITHDRAWAL AND THE TAKING OVER OF THE UN PEACEKEEPING FORCES IS SOMETHING THAT YOU OUGHT TO ASK AT THE UN ABOUT.

Q. IN VIEW OF WHAT YOU SAID EARLIER ABOUT THE REINFORCEMENT OF FORCES CONTRARY TO THE OBJECTIVES, HOW DOES THE U.S. GOVERNMENT REGARD THE REPORTS THAT ISRAEL IS MOVING CHRISTIAN MILITIA MEN INTO THAT AREA?

A. I THINK WE WOULD PROBABLY REGARD THAT IN THE SAME WAY.

Q. AS CONTRARY TO THE OBJECTIVES?

A. I THINK THAT THE OBJECTIVES ARE TO ESTABLISH PEACE, THAT THE UNITED NATIONS IS SEIZED AND CHARGED WITH THAT OBJECTIVE. AND I THINK THAT ACTIONS OUTSIDE OF THAT MANDATE WOULD BE -- I DON'T SAY THEY WOULD BE CONTRARY TO PEACE, BUT I THINK THAT WE FEEL THAT IT IS BEST HANDLED IN THE WAY THAT IT HAS BEEN SET UP BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL.

Q. HAS THAT POINT BEEN MADE TO ISRAEL?

A. I DON'T KNOW THAT IT HAS BEEN MADE CLEAR TO THEM.

Q. COULD YOU TAKE THAT QUESTION?

A. YES.

Q. IS THERE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN REINFORCING THE PALESTINIAN STAND INSIDE LEBANON AND REINFORCING THE LEBANESE STAND IN LEBANON -- OF WHAT YOU HAVE SAID RIGHT NOW? THE LEBANESE ARE TRYING TO DEFEND THEIR COUNTRY AND THE PLO -- YOU KNOW.

A. WE ARE TALKING ABOUT THE AREA OF SOUTHERN LEBANON

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THAT IS UNDER QUESTION NOW, THE AREA THAT HAS BEEN OCCUPIED BY ISRAELI FORCES.

Q. WELL, DOESN'T THE LEBANESE HAVE THE RIGHT TO DEFEND THEIR OWN AREA, OR BE REINFORCED?

A. YES, THEY DO. BUT WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT THE SECURITY COUNCIL MANDATE WILL TAKE CARE OF THEIR INTERESTS IN THAT RESPECT. AND THE LEBANESE, I WOULD REMIND YOU, HAVE NOT ONLY BEEN HEARD IN THE UN BUT THEY HAVE BEEN VERY EFFECTIVE IN COOPERATING WITH THE ARRANGEMENTS THAT THE UN HAS BEEN ABLE TO TAKE -- SO I DON'T THINK THAT THEIR VOICE IS NOT BEING HEARD.

Q. WASN'T IT IN FACT A US POLICY ENUNCIATED IN THIS ROOM, THAT WHAT THE UNITED STATES HOPES FOR IN THE LONG RUN IS THAT THE UN FORCE CAN BE COMPLEMENTED BY AND EVENTUALLY BE REPLACED BY, LEBANESE FORCES?

A. YES, EVENTUALLY. YES, THAT IS RIGHT. BUT I THOUGHT WE WERE TALKING ABOUT THE IMMEDIATE SITUATION.

Q. YES, BUT I MEAN, HOW CAN IT BE THE IDEAL LONG TERM SOLUTION AND YET BE CONTRARY TO THE INTERESTS OF PEACE IF IT HAPPENS NOW?

A. WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT? THE MOVEMENT OF WHICH PEOPLE NOW?

Q. THE LEBANESE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS. WELL, IF I UNDERSTAND YOU CORRECTLY, YOU ARE SAYING IT WOULD NOT BE HELPFUL TO THE PEACE PROCESS IF THAT HAPPENS. IS THAT CORRECT? BUT THAT EVENTUALLY YOU ARE LOOKING FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF UNCLASSIFIED

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THE UN FORCE BY LEBANESE FORCES.

MR. MEDEIROS: BY THE LEBANESE ARMY.

Q. SO IT'S THE DISTINCTION THAT IS BEING DRAWN, THEN, BETWEEN THE ARMY AND THE MILITIA -- IS THAT IT?

A. I THINK "BY THE LEBANESE ARMY" IS THE RIGHT ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION. YES.

Q. PRIME MINISTER BEGIN, IN AN INTERVIEW ON NBC THIS MORNING, MADE REFERENCE TO AN AGREEMENT THAT HE SAYS EXISTS BETWEEN THE SAUDI ARABIA AND OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES --

I DON'T THINK IT WAS QUITE CLEAR WHICH OTHER ARAB COUNTRY --

ON THE POSSIBLE AVAILABILITY OF THE F-15S THAT THE UNITED STATES WANTS TO SELL TO SAUDI ARABIA -- TO THAT COUNTRY. DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING AT ALL ABOUT THAT?

A. NO, I DON'T.

Q. COULD YOU TAKE THAT QUESTION, PLEASE?

A. I CAN CERTAINLY TRY TO SEE WHAT WE MIGHT KNOW ABOUT IT.

Q. DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT OR THE ADMINISTRATION HAVE ANY INFORMATION THAT WOULD INDICATE THAT THE ISRAELI INVASION OF SOUTHERN LEBANON WAS PLANNED PRIOR TO THE FATAH RAID IN ISRAEL?

A. NO.

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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